

REMARKS

Claims 7, 9 to 18, and 20 to 22 are pending, of which claims 7 and 20 to 22 are independent. Favorable reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Initially, we thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 8, 9, 12 and 14 recite allowable subject matter. As shown above, claim 8 has been incorporated into independent claim 7, and new claims 20 to 22 have been presented which include, respectively, (20) the subject matter of former claims 7 and 9, (21) the subject matter of former claims 7 and 12, and (22) the subject matter of former claims 7 and 14. Accordingly, the entire application should be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

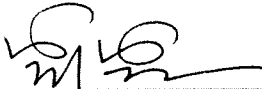
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Respectfully submitted,

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